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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION

(for the period 9 April to 2 October 1991)

Introduction

1. By paragraph 5 of its resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991, the Security Council established a demilitarized zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border and decided to set up an observer unit with the following tasks: to monitor the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway and the demilitarized zone; to deter violations of the boundary through its presence in and surveillance of the demilitarized zone; and to observe any hostile or potentially hostile action mounted from the territory of one State into the other. By its resolution 689 (1991) of 9 April 1991, the Security Council approved my report on the implementation of the above provisions (S/22454 and Add.1-3); noted that the decision to set up the observer unit had been taken in paragraph 5 of resolution 687 (1991) and could only be terminated by the Council's decision; and decided to review the question of termination or continuation as well as the modalities of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) every six months.

2. The purpose of the present report is to provide the Security Council, prior to its review, with an overview of the first six months of UNIKOM activities. It also updates my reports of 9 May (S/22580), 12 June (S/22692) and 3 September 1991 (S/23000), which covered the greater part of the reporting period in some detail.

Setting up of UNIKOM in the field

3. The setting up of UNIKOM in the field began with the arrival of the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Günther G. Greindl, and his advance party in the mission area on 13 April. The advance party comprising military observers temporarily assigned from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and civilian staff. Over the following three weeks, UNIKOM conducted a thorough reconnaissance of its assigned zone, developed a deployment plan, organized its transport, set up a communications network, developed its lines of supply and provided training and familiarization for the incoming

personnel. UNIKOM deployment was completed on 6 May. UNIKOM then monitored the withdrawal of the armed forces that were still deployed in its assigned zone. That withdrawal having been completed, the demilitarized zone (DMZ) established by the Security Council came into effect at 2000 hours Greenwich mean time (GMT) on 9 May 1991.

Organization

4. At the beginning of October 1991, UNIKOM comprised the following personnel:

Military observers

Argentina	7	Nigeria	7
Austria	7	Norway	8
Bangladesh	7	Pakistan	9
Canada	1	Poland	7
China	20	Romania	7
Denmark	7	Senegal	7
Fiji	8	Singapore	7
Finland	7	Sweden	8
France	20	Thailand	7
Ghana	8	Turkey	7
Greece	7	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	20
Hungary	7	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	16
India	8	United States of America	19
Indonesia	7	Uruguay	8
Ireland	8	Venezuela	7
Italy	6		
Kenya	8		
Malaysia	8		
		Total	295

Administrative and logistic support

Engineers (Canada)	292
Logistics (Sweden)	30
Movement control/post (Denmark)	19
Helicopters (Chile)	50
Medical (Norway)	50
Total	441

UNIKOM includes also 177 civilian staff, of whom 106 are United Nations staff and 71 are locally recruited. Two small fixed-wing aircraft contributed by the Government of Switzerland are operated by civilians. In addition, UNIKOM had the use of chartered aircraft for the movement of troops and equipment and for communications between Baghdad and Kuwait. The Government of Sweden provided free airlift at the beginning of the mission.

5. The plan for UNIKOM, which was formulated in the first days of April, took into account the uncertainties existing at the time and the risks that might arise. For this reason, three infantry companies (Fiji, Ghana, Nepal) from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and two infantry companies (Austria and Denmark) from the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) were temporarily assigned to UNIKOM to provide security. Fortunately the risks perceived in early April did not materialize, and by the end of June the infantry companies returned to their parent missions, as did a logistic company (Sweden) that had also been temporarily detached from UNIFIL.

6. Logistic support for the Mission was difficult at first because the war had resulted in the destruction or severe disruption of the infrastructure in the area. UNIKOM, therefore, relied on substantial support provided by the United States Army and by the forces of other Member States cooperating with Kuwait. The Governments of Iraq and Kuwait also gave support to UNIKOM. The situation has since improved and UNIKOM now has its full complement of transport and communications equipment, much of which came from the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). For most of the period, and especially during the summer, living conditions in the DMZ were austere and very demanding, the military personnel being accommodated under canvas. The provision of air-conditioned prefabricated trailers in September has improved conditions greatly. The Mission was launched from and is being supplied through Kuwait, which has the international airport nearest to the DMZ.

7. A serious hazard from the beginning was the large number of mines and unexploded ordnance left over from the war. UNIKOM engineers cleared some 1,100 kilometres of patrol track and the sites for observation posts, camps and helicopter pads and disposed of some 7,000 mines and pieces of unexploded ordnance. The engineers also carried out construction work on the various camp facilities and on the future headquarters at Umm Qasr. There will be a continuing requirement for explosive ordnance demolition and the maintenance of patrol tracks and facilities in the DMZ. In addition, the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission, established under paragraph 3 of resolution 687 (1991), will require significant engineer support. Provision of this has already begun through the clearing of sites and the placing of preliminary survey markers. So far, 121 out of a projected 165 markers have been placed.

8. As I informed the Security Council in my letter of 6 August 1991 (S/22916), a number of adjustments are being made to the logistic support elements. For the reasons mentioned above, 85 engineers will be retained in UNIKOM but their number will be further reduced when the work in support of the Boundary Demarcation Commission has been completed (see S/22916).

Further, the Swedish logistic unit, which was made available for six months only, will be withdrawn. Its tasks and that of the movement control staff will be consolidated in one unit of 45 all ranks, which will be provided by Denmark. Finally, the size of the medical unit will be reduced from 50 to 20. These adjustments will be carried out in the next weeks.

9. With the agreement of the Security Council, I have postponed the reduction in the number of military observers that I had intended to effect (S/22977 and S/22978). I shall keep this matter under review and revert to the Council when appropriate.

10. UNIKOM headquarters was initially located south of Kuwait City in a hotel annex made available by the Government of Kuwait. In June, the headquarters moved temporarily to the logistic base at Doha. Work continues at the future headquarters at Umm Qasr to make it habitable.

11. Major-General Greindl and his senior staff have maintained close contact and held regular meetings with the authorities at Baghdad and Kuwait City. In addition, the UNIKOM liaison staff were in daily contact with their Iraqi and Kuwaiti counterparts. UNIKOM maintains liaison offices at Baghdad and Kuwait City. Local liaison with the Iraqi authorities is also effected through an Iraqi liaison office at Umm Qasr.

Demilitarized zone

12. The DMZ is about 200 kilometres long, to which must be added the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway, with a length of about 40 kilometres. For the most part, the DMZ is barren and almost uninhabited, except for the towns of Umm Qasr and Safwan. There are airfields at Safwan and Umm Qasr and a port at Umm Qasr. A number of roads cross the DMZ, most of them in the eastern part, but the terrain makes cross-country travel easy, and there are numerous tracks, especially in the central and southern sectors. There are few features in the terrain and it is easy to mistake one's location by a wide margin. It is also easy to mistake the location of the border, which remains to be marked.

13. When UNIKOM arrived in the area, a large number of displaced persons were in the Safwan area. Most of these were moved prior to the establishment of the DMZ, and only a small number remain at the Abdali camp on Kuwaiti territory south of Safwan.

Deployment and concept of operations

14. For operational purposes, UNIKOM has divided the DMZ into three sectors. Each sector has a headquarters and six observation posts/patrol bases. UNIKOM enjoys full freedom of movement throughout the DMZ. The deployment of UNIKOM is shown on the attached map.

15. UNIKOM's concept of operations, which has been further refined during recent months, places emphasis on mobile patrols in order to observe the length and breadth of the DMZ. The fixed observation posts serve as patrol bases from which the military observers patrol their assigned sectors and visit temporary observation points established in areas of particular activity or where roads and tracks enter the DMZ. In addition to the patrols, all other movements, supply runs for example, are also used for observation; investigation teams are frequently dispatched. Observation on the ground is supplemented by air patrols, using helicopters and the two fixed-wing aircraft. Again, all other flights are also used for observation.

Violations and complaints

16. Since the DMZ came into effect on 9 May, UNIKOM has observed three types of violations: minor incursions on the ground by small groups of soldiers, often just one or two; overflights by military aircraft; and the carrying by policemen of weapons other than sidearms. The largest number of ground incursions, 65, occurred in the month immediately after the establishment of the DMZ. UNIKOM then put up signs on the main roads and tracks to mark entry into the DMZ; after that, the number of ground incursions dropped significantly. The overflights were by military aircraft of a type used by the forces of Member States cooperating with Kuwait and, since early September, also of a type used by Kuwait.

17. In order to reduce the risk of incidents and as envisaged from the outset (S/22454, para. 6), UNIKOM obtained the agreement of the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait that their police operating in the DMZ would carry only sidearms. Both sides have expressed misgivings about this limitation, pointing out that smugglers and other elements with whom the police have to contend are generally armed with rifles and light machine-guns. UNIKOM has observed a number of violations by both sides, including cases in which policemen have kept rifles out of sight in their posts and vehicles.

18. The following table summarizes the violations observed by UNIKOM:

	Iraq				Kuwait/allied forces			
	Ground	Air	Police weapons	Total	Ground	Air	Police weapons	Total
10 May-9 June	8	-	-	8	57	29	-	86
10 June-9 July	4	-	-	4	29	28	-	57
10 July-9 August	1	-	6	7	9	9	6	24
10 August-9 September	5	-	4	9	13	13	1	27
10 September-2 October	-	-	1	1	6	7	3	16
Total	18	-	11	29	114	86	10	210

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All violations were raised in writing with the party concerned, with a view to preventing a recurrence.

19. During the reporting period, UNIKOM received 28 written complaints from Iraq and 10 from Kuwait. It investigated those complaints and was able in 13 cases to establish the facts through its own observation. The results of the investigations were conveyed to the party concerned.

Other matters

20. One of the purposes of UNIKOM is to deter violations of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait through its presence in, and surveillance of, the DMZ. Pending demarcation of the boundary, UNIKOM has not taken a position concerning its precise location. UNIKOM uses a British map, which it has given to both sides for reference. They have agreed to work with it as a practical arrangement to facilitate UNIKOM's task and without prejudice to their positions concerning the boundary.

21. In order to avoid friction and incidents, UNIKOM has established the principle that the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities, including police, should stay a reasonable distance of 1,000 metres from the boundary line shown on UNIKOM maps. It is not intended that this should lead to the creation of a no-man's land. The authorities retain the right to carry out their functions throughout their respective parts of the DMZ, except that they are expected to consult UNIKOM in advance if those functions should require them to approach closer than 1,000 metres to the boundary line shown on UNIKOM's map. Such consultation enables UNIKOM to take measures to avoid incidents.

22. Two main problems have arisen in this regard. First, the removal from storage at Umm Qasr of 11 "HY-2G" missiles and later 4 further missiles of the same type. I informed the Security Council of this matter on 5 July. UNIKOM took it up with the Iraqi authorities, who have since returned 4 of the missiles to the storage at Umm Qasr but not the other 11.

23. Secondly, Iraq has deployed 4 border police centres and 10 border police posts in the DMZ. Five of the posts are on the Kuwaiti side of the boundary line shown on the UNIKOM map; two are closer to it than 1,000 metres, on the Iraqi side. Lengthy and intensive efforts have been made at United Nations Headquarters as well as in the field to persuade Iraq to move the seven posts further back. However, the Iraqi authorities have maintained that they had been in place before 2 August 1990 and that they would not be pulled back because of the political implications. The Iraqi authorities have assured UNIKOM that Iraq will comply with the reasonable distance principle, once the boundary is demarcated. UNIKOM has recently observed harbour and local police at Umm Qasr, and the Iraqi authorities have indicated that they intend to deploy more policemen in the DMZ. They have undertaken to consult UNIKOM in advance of such deployment.

24. For its part, Kuwait has established five police posts and one police observation point in the DMZ. The Kuwaiti authorities have been in touch with UNIKOM about the locations of these posts and of additional posts which they plan to set up. They have also reiterated their willingness to comply with the reasonable distance principle if the Iraqi authorities do so as well.

25. In accordance with the plan approved by the Security Council in its resolution 689 (1991), UNIKOM requires that it be informed in advance of the movement of ships through the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway (see S/22454, para. 6). In September, UNIKOM observed movements by an Iraqi pilot ship and a maintenance ship between Umm Qasr and the Khawr 'Abd Allah waterway. UNIKOM had not been informed of these movements and raised them with the Iraqi authorities, who have since complied with the UNIKOM notification requirement.

26. In the course of August, tension rose as a result of incursions from Iraq into Kuwaiti territory by persons collecting weapons, ammunition and other battlefield items. These persons, and others similarly engaged in the Iraqi part of the DMZ, were dressed in civilian clothes and used civilian vehicles. The question has been raised whether they are in fact military personnel but UNIKOM has not been able to establish that this is so. It has, however, been informed by the Iraqi authorities that they offer rewards to persons who retrieve weapons and ammunition from the battlefield. It has also had indications that there is an unofficial market for such items in Iraq. In addition to its own observations, UNIKOM has been informed by the Kuwaiti authorities of such incursions and of arrests they have made. One such incident investigated by UNIKOM occurred on 28 August, when the Kuwaiti Coast Guard took 12 small vessels and detained 45 Iraqis off the Kuwaiti island of Bubiyan. I reported on these matters on 3 September (S/23000, paras. 12-14). Subsequently such incursions subsided. However, on 30 September and 1 October, UNIKOM observed in its southern sector Iraqis collecting mines on the Kuwaiti side of the line shown on the UNIKOM map, at a minefield that straddles that line.

27. In the Iraqi part of the DMZ the collection of military equipment and ammunition has continued. Recently, mines and unexploded ordnance have also been lifted. It is evident that there are persons engaged in this dangerous activity who are not trained for it; there have been numerous casualties and to UNIKOM's knowledge at least 16 persons have died during the last 10 days. Many of the casualties were brought to UNIKOM posts, from where they were evacuated by helicopter and treated by UNIKOM's medical staff. UNIKOM raised this matter with the Iraqi authorities on humanitarian grounds. On 2 October 1991, the Iraqi authorities informed UNIKOM that they had issued strict instructions to the police to stop civilians from collecting mines in the DMZ. It is hoped therefore that the problems described in this and the preceding paragraph will not recur.

28. I have reported previously about the so-called "sheep market", an illegal market where alcohol and arms are traded as well as livestock (S/23000, para. 11). That market has recently moved to a location astride the boundary line in the southern sector. On 15 September, UNIKOM received a complaint

from the Kuwaiti liaison staff with the request that it investigate an incident in which 80 armed men from the market had allegedly attacked a Kuwaiti police post with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades and had taken two policemen hostage. The UNIKOM team investigating the incident found no evidence of damage to the police cabins or vehicles, and established that the two missing policemen had been on an errand in Kuwait City. At the sheep market, the traders stated that they had approached the police post to borrow water but the policemen had opened fire, killing one. The UNIKOM team found that man's body some 20 metres from the police post and at the sheep market was shown a water truck with numerous bullet holes.

Financial aspects

29. Should the Security Council continue the mandate of UNIKOM beyond 8 October 1991, the cost of maintaining the Mission for a period of six months would be approximately $40 million, based on the continuance of its existing strength and responsibilities. The resources needed for maintaining UNIKOM beyond 8 October 1991 will be sought from the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. In the event that the mandate is extended beyond six months, the Secretary-General will report to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to the General Assembly during its forty-seventh session on the additional resources needed.

Observations

30. During the last six months, UNIKOM deployed in its area of operation and carried out its tasks pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council in paragraph 5 of its resolution 687 (1991) and in accordance with the implementation plan approved by the Council in its resolution 689 (1991). The DMZ established by the Security Council has been generally respected and the area has been calm. UNIKOM has thus served the purpose for which it was created and, in the light of all the circumstances, I recommend that the Security Council maintain it in the area for a further six-month period.

31. As indicated by the table in paragraph 18 above, there have been rather few violations due to ground incursions by military personnel into the DMZ and their frequency has been falling. The main source of friction during the period under review has been the movement of persons from Iraq to Kuwait across a border which remains to be demarcated. Given Kuwait's recent experience, these unauthorized border crossings have understandably given cause for concern to the Kuwaiti authorities, who have frequently raised them with UNIKOM.

32. Some of these border crossings are by bedouins and reflect a longstanding practice which has been countenanced by both sides in the past. Others are attributable to the suppliers and customers of the illegal sheep market, which itself changes location from time to time in the border area. These movements are of some concern to UNIKOM because of the violent incidents to which they

sometimes give rise and because those associated with the sheep market are armed with, and trade in, weapons of a higher calibre than those which the police of either side are permitted to carry in the DMZ. This is essentially a law and order problem, which UNIKOM has drawn to the attention of both Governments.

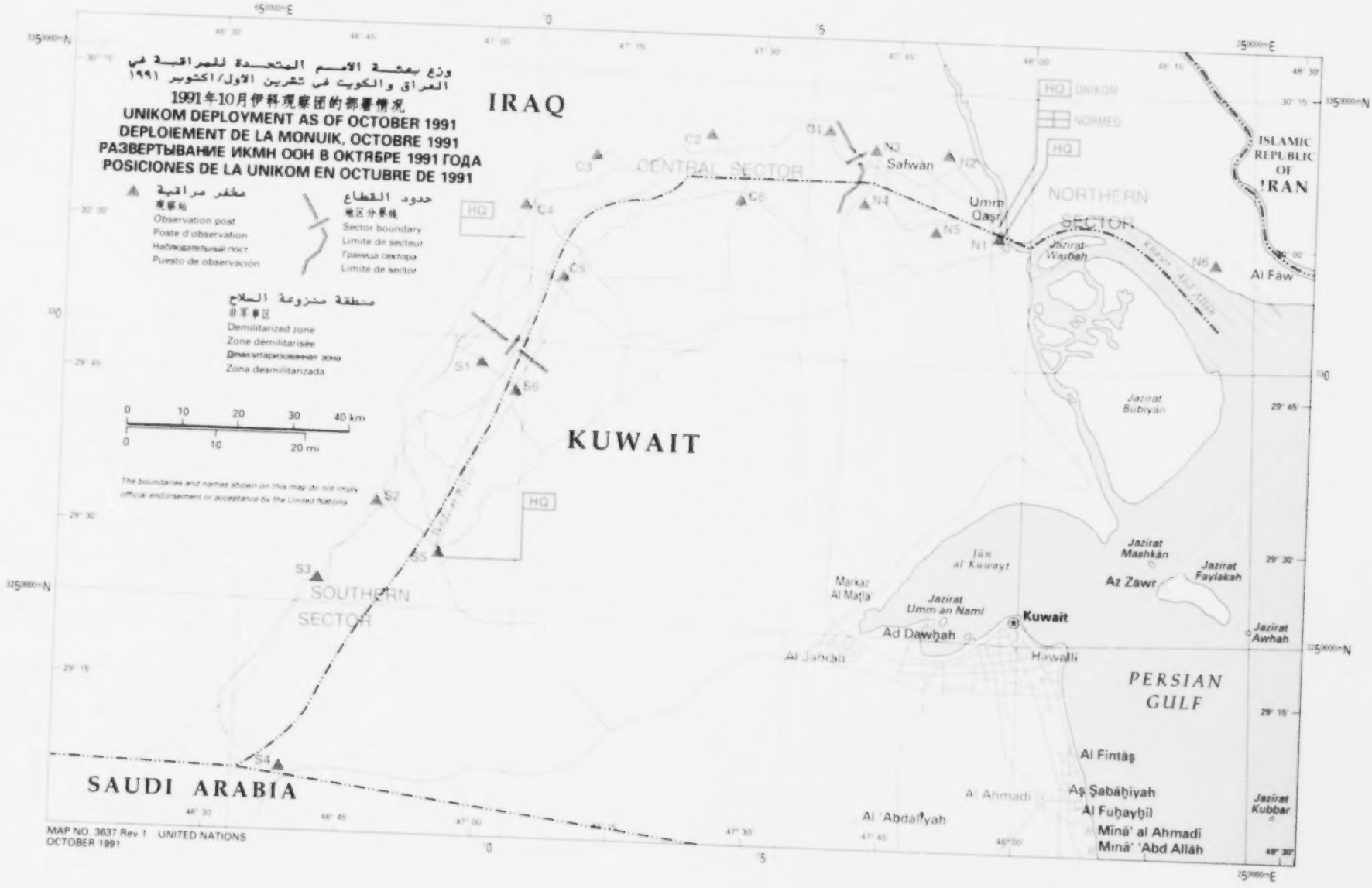
33. A third category of border crossings is caused by persons from Iraq who have penetrated deep into Kuwait in search of weapons, ammunition and other battlefield items. As far as UNIKOM has been able to ascertain, these persons are civilians attracted by the prices which such items fetch, from official or unofficial purchasers, in Iraq. Again, UNIKOM has raised this matter with the Iraqi authorities both because of the tension to which it can give rise and, on humanitarian grounds, because of the carnage suffered by the persons who engage in this very dangerous practice (see para. 27 above).

34. UNIKOM's responsibilities vis-à-vis unauthorized border crossings in these various categories have been misunderstood in some quarters. When UNIKOM first deployed it encountered the widely held expectation in the area that it would assume overall responsibility in the DMZ and police it. In the same vein, it was often referred to as the "United Nations forces". To some extent, these expectations have persisted. It is therefore worth repeating that UNIKOM has been constituted as an observation mission and does not have the authority, under the terms of resolution 689 (1991), to assume law enforcement functions. Nor does it have the capacity to do so; the military observers are unarmed and the armed infantry elements have been withdrawn.

35. The continued presence of Iraqi police posts on the Kuwaiti side of the line shown on UNIKOM's map remains a matter of concern. I have instructed the Chief Military Observer of UNIKOM to persevere in his efforts to have these police posts pulled back behind the line.

36. UNIKOM has functioned well, with the cooperation of the parties. Its concept of operations has proven adequate to the task and Major-General Greindl is confident that UNIKOM would detect any significant military movement in or close to the DMZ. With additional experience, the UNIKOM operations will be further refined. There is, however, one aspect of its modalities that seems to require early improvement. This relates to its observation capability, particularly when the weather conditions limit visibility and make air surveillance difficult. Such difficulties cannot be overcome by increasing the number of military observers; UNIKOM is very adequately staffed. Electronic instruments, especially radar, would seem to provide the only means of ensuring continuous observation throughout the DMZ. General Greindl has made a recommendation to this effect, which is now being studied, taking into account financial as well as operational considerations.

37. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments that have contributed personnel to UNIKOM and have provided support in other practical forms. I also wish to pay tribute to Major-General Greindl, to his military and civilian staff, to the military observers and to the soldiers of the support units for the skill and dedication with which they have carried out their tasks in difficult conditions.



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